



LIFELINK

NEWSLETTER

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The Sabotage of the Imposter Phenomenon

Have you ever transferred to a new command, a new position or a new rank, and felt completely unprepared and insecure about your work performance? You don't have to admit it out loud, but many in the Navy suffer in silence with the thought that they are "frauds" who, only by sheer luck, attained their achievements, successes, and accolades. Instead of realizing that their skill, intuitiveness, and knowledge contributed to their ability to transfer or advance, they may believe that someone made a terrible mistake in allowing it.

The structure and culture of the Navy can often require Sailors to take on new responsibilities with little preparation. Sailors may take on a collateral duty, and even with all the instruction and training, still feel overwhelmed and unprepared. The ability to adapt is highly praised, but constantly feeling unprepared can erode our feelings of self-worth and make us question if we truly belong.

"Imposter Syndrome" is a term coined in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes to describe a feeling of "phoniness in people who believe that they are not intelligent, capable or creative despite evidence of high achievement."

The imposter phenomenon is not an official psychological diagnosis, but it can often be associated with anxiety and depression. It can occur in anyone but is often felt by high-achievers who connect their self-worth to success and question if they truly belong in their position. For Sailors, talking about self-doubt may be uncomfortable. It isn't exactly a typical topic of discussion at the smoke deck or in the galley. The imposter phenomenon can cause fear of being found out as a fraud who is not really qualified to do the assigned job, resulting in ridicule, humiliation, and shame, when the reality is that they are fully competent and capable.

You can overcome these feelings without embarrassment. When feelings of insecurity become overwhelming, there are some things that you can do to remind yourself that everything you've earned is due to your hard work and dedication, not sheer luck or coincidence.

- **Develop and maintain high-quality connections, and find mentors.** These sorts of relationships are built on trust, commitment, and encouragement. By sharing

experiences, proving that you're not the only one who has had feelings of self-doubt, a mentor can help you learn to use vulnerability to your advantage and continue to excel. Others have been in your shoes, so you don't always have to "figure it out on your own."

- **Keep a running list of your successes and accomplishments.** It may sound like an activity for the self-absorbed, but when you feel like your achievements are not deserved, acknowledging them and realizing how many there are can be a great reminder that you truly earned them.
- **Realize that perfection is not attainable.** Zero-defect is often the goal because we want to avoid accidents at sea or major mishaps, but you are human. Instead of thinking, "I'm not good enough," "I'm a failure," or "I'm a terrible LPO," allow your inner voice to say, "I'm doing my best," "I'm trying," and "I'm working on it." That change will dramatically alter how you feel and respond to challenges.

The imposter phenomenon can manifest in multiple ways. No matter how it shows up in your life, it is important to remember a few key points: achieving perfection is nearly impossible, making mistakes and facing setbacks are normal parts of the process, seeking external validation is a surefire way to feel insecure, and asking for help is not a sign of failure.

If you or a shipmate is dealing with psychological health concerns, the BeThere Peer Support Call and Outreach Center offers resources and information 24/7/365 via phone at 844-357-7337 or on their website at <http://www.betherepeersupport.org>.



Lifelink Spotlight

Standard of Conduct Training for Suicide Prevention and Awareness

Small ACTs can make an immense difference in the lives of shipmates dealing with psychological crises. Staff and students at the Center for Surface Combat Systems Unit (CSCSU) Dam Neck recently took part in a training to raise awareness of the essential role that ACTing plays in suicide prevention.

The Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) sponsored the training which aimed to educate Sailors on suicide risk and show the importance of speaking out and reaching out.

While reaching out to help others is important, it is also crucial to help yourself. "We not only need to take care of each other and act upon those first few warning signs, but we also need to take care of ourselves," Capt. John Vliet, commanding officer of CSCSU Dam Neck, said. "There is no shame in asking for help."

Chief Petty Officer Josue Chevalier has seen the effects of asking and caring in his own experiences. "All it took was... asking her a simple question" to prevent the suicide of one of his own Sailors. "I had no idea until the Sailor came back months later to thank me for acknowledging her."

For many of those attending, suicide had hit close to home, as indicated when asked to stand if they knew anyone who had died by suicide.

A silent walk took place after the training, which provided time for participants to remember those who had died by suicide, reflect on their feelings and thoughts, and consider how to help fellow shipmates moving forward.

"If you don't think anyone cares, please know that we do and there are many ways to seek help," Vliet said. Resources such as your command leadership, suicide prevention coordinators, Fleet and Family Services, or the **Suicide Prevention Lifeline** are all available.

For information on the Center for Surface Combat System, visit <https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/cscs/> or visit them on Facebook.



Plan of the Week Notes

Below are sample Plan of the Week notes aligning with topics covered by the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign during the month of May:

1. Did you know that the early summer months are a high risk period for substance use among young adults? Or that psychological health issues and substance use are often linked? National Prevention Week, taking place from May 13-19, is dedicated to raising awareness of these issues, promoting the importance of psychological wellness and prevention of substance use disorders. Learn more about NPW at <https://go.usa.gov/xQW7Y>.
2. When you have a physical injury or illness, there is no hesitation to go see a doctor to figure out what's wrong. Your mental health should be no different. Address stress, anxiety, depression or other psychological health concerns proactively so that you can maintain Total Sailor Fitness. May is Mental Health Month and is a great time to learn more about the ways you can strengthen yourself from the inside out. Visit <https://go.usa.gov/x5bMc> for more.
3. Engaging in some friendly competition with a buddy can be a great motivator to maintain your physical fitness. Plus, exercising with someone can help relieve stress and give you accountability. Learn more of the benefits of having a workout buddy. Check out <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2017/05/04/5-benefits-of-working-out-with-a-buddy/>.
4. Whether dealing with stress, anxiety, or depression, difficulties in relationships or problems with being away from home and family, having someone to listen can make a world of difference. Reach out to the Military Crisis Line, available 24/7 by phone at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1), via text at 838255, or on the web at www.militarycrisisline.net.

Gun Locks for Lethal Means Safety

Navy Suicide Prevention Branch (OPNAV N171), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) have partnered to provide gun locks to suicide prevention coordinators (SPCs) at CONUS Naval Hospitals and Naval Branch Medical Clinics. Patients assessed to be at risk for suicide who also own firearms should be given a gun lock and educated on the importance of reducing access to lethal means during periods of crisis. Providers are reminded of **NAVADMIN 263/14** when discussing high risk cases with commands. This evidence-based program has been legally approved and there are no additional legal or administrative requirements for the command. Contact Mr. Vic Gooden with OPNAV N171 at 901-874-6613 or victor.gooden@navy.mil for more information.

News and Resources

Think You Need Equipment to Exercise? Think Again!

[NavyNavStress](#)

Imagery Improves Your Total Fitness

[Human Performance Resource Center](#)

Study Confirms Military Family Counseling Works

[Military OneSource](#)

Psychological Fitness – Keeping Your Mind Fit

[Real Warriors](#)

Seven Postpartum Fitness Tips for New Moms

[Military OneSource](#)

The Benefits of Having Pets

[Guard Your Health](#)

Giving Your Child a Happy, Healthy Start

[Military OneSource](#)

Recognizing and Seeking Help for Substance Misuse

[Real Warriors](#)

Small Changes, Big Results: Healthy Lifestyle Choices can Make a Difference for Heart Health

[Health.mil](#)

Do I Have Sleep Apnea?

[Guard Your Health](#)

How to “Measure Up” without Bringing Yourself Down

[Human Performance Resource Center](#)

New DoD Educational Podcast Series Promotes Better Health

[Health.mil](#)

Living Within Your Means

[Military OneSource](#)

Current and Upcoming Events

Mental Health Awareness Month

Navy Physical Fitness Month

Military Appreciation Month
May

National Prevention Week
May 13-19, 2018

SPC Training Webinars

May 23, 4 p.m. CDT

June 7, 10 a.m. CDT

[Register here](#)

Exercise can Help You Navigate Stress

Stress is associated with a variety of chronic health issues. Workload, transition periods, and relationship challenges can cause stress, and too much of it can have an impact on our minds and bodies. You may notice that after a particularly challenging couple of days, your muscles are tight or you have a hard time relaxing. After an extended period of stress, your waistline may start to look a bit different as well due to increases in cortisol. Because cortisol is our body's response to “fight mode,” where it expects that we'll be expending calories as if we were physically combatting our stress, hunger sets in...and so do the pounds. What's one prescription to get our brains and bodies back in optimal shape for the long haul? Exercise.



Being active can help reduce the negative effects of stress while encouraging long-term physical and mental health. However, when balancing stressful and busy schedules, many individuals tend to create excuses for not exercising—which become habits. To help you get in top shape, here are three tips to counter common barriers to adopting and maintaining a regular physical fitness regime:

- **Not enough time? Break it up!** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, time is the number one cited reason for not exercising regularly. While continuous physical activity—i.e. 50 minutes of cardio three times per week—is ideal, that may sound overwhelming when there already doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day. Make time for your exercise by breaking it up into shorter bursts. Go for a 20 minute run around your building or the deck at lunch, or do a few sets of lunges each hour in your workspace to get started. Even by taking the stairs throughout the day, you're taking steps toward a healthier way of life.
- **Build momentum for motivation.** You may have wanted to get fit for a while but don't know where to start. Try “unplugging,” giving yourself 15 minutes each day to get away from your smart phone, tablet or TV screen. Use that screen-free time to stretch or perform simple body weight exercises around the house or your living quarters. For added motivation and accountability, invite a friend to exercise with you and develop a regular routine that is convenient for you both.
- **Find something you enjoy doing.** If fitness doesn't seem accessible to you—whether it's a matter of finding a gym or knowing how to perform certain activities—switch up your strategy. Try a group activity like yoga, which can burn up to 500 calories per hour and help you refocus your thoughts (two for one!). Your local installation may offer yoga and other group fitness classes, easing your apprehension about going to an unfamiliar (or expensive) fitness center. You can get a list of local offerings by visiting [navy.mil](#). And remember, the gym isn't the only place to exercise! You'll be surprised by how many common items there are in your work space to help you expand or get the most out of your workouts.

Simple, everyday adjustments to get more active can yield big returns. Exercise increases production of the brain's feel-good neuro-transmitters called endorphins, which can play a vital role in navigating stress. Routine physical activity can also lessen your chance of depression and may improve your sleep habits. Now is the perfect time to stop the excuses and start moving to benefit your health from the inside out!

This article was submitted by our partners at the Navy's Physical Readiness Program. Check out their latest post on our [NavyNavStress](#) blog, “Think You Need Equipment to Exercise? Think Again!,” which features workouts that can be done in confined spaces or when you're short on time. Subscribe to the blog to get Small ACTs to help you navigate stress delivered directly to your inbox!